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SUBJECT: REASSESSING U.S. POSTURE AND TACTICS TOWARD THE CPC

¶1. SUMMARY: With the start of the 48th session of the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) scheduled for June 9, USUN believes the time is appropriate to reassess our current posture toward CPC with a view to determining what steps, if any, we can take to make CPC a more effective entity within the Organization. The current strategic framework approach under which the CPC makes recommendations concerning the programmatic priorities of the Organization close to a year and a half before the General Assembly considers the next biennium budget has resulted in budget proposals that are piecemeal in nature, with significant "add-on" costs beyond the programs reviewed and approved by CPC. Linking the timing of CPC's determination of program priorities more closely to the Secretariat's actual presentation of the budget to the GA might offer one possible improvement. More broadly, we need to consider whether our current approach to CPC should be maintained or modified, including the possible involvement of CPC in the mandate review process, in order to achieve outcomes that advance U.S. interests. END SUMMARY.

CPC 48th SESSION

¶2. The Committee on Programme and Coordination (CPC) will hold its 48th session at UN headquarters from June 9 to July 3, 2008. As was the case during CPC's 47th Session (June 11-July 5, 2007), USUN/MR will represent the U.S. as an observer, allowed to present views on issues raised but not participate in decisions taken by Committee members, including recommendations for inclusion in the CPC final report to be submitted to ECOSOC and the GA during the Fall 2008 Main Session of the 63rd UNGA. China has been selected to chair this year's session, with Bulgaria, South Africa and Venezuela serving as vice-chairs, and Italy as rapporteur.

¶3. At the Committee's upcoming 48th session, CPC members are scheduled to review the performance and evaluation reports of the Organization for the 2006-2007 biennium; assess and offer recommendations on the proposed strategic framework for 2010-2011, including the plan outline (reflecting the longer-term objectives of the UN); consider a report prepared by OIOS evaluating Special Political Missions that are led by DPKO but managed by DPA; review the annual report of the UN System Chief Executives Board (CEB) for 2007-2008 and the SYG's report on systems support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD); and discuss possible additional ways the Committee might improve its working methods and procedures within the framework of its mandate. For the first time, the Committee also has scheduled a senior-level meeting of members, recommended at ambassadorial level, to consider ways CPC can enhance its dialogue on coordination issues with the Joint Inspection Unit and CEB Secretariat.

FLAWS IN THE STRATEGIC
FRAMEWORK APPROACH AND
CPC'S ROLE IN THAT PROCESS

¶4. During this year,s CPC session, Committee members will review and comment on the programmatic aspects of the 27 different fascicles on which the 2010-2011 budget will be based. This approach, originally called for by Member States in Resolution 58/269 and reaffirmed in Resolution 62/224, relies on the strategic framework as the principal policy directive of the United Nations. However, a fundamental weakness in this approach has been that the programmatic priorities decided by CPC members will not be acted upon by the General Assembly until some 18 months after the CPC session. The CPC will not, therefore, consider in the context of its strategic framework review at the upcoming session new developments that may necessitate between now and the Fall of 2009 the creation of additional programs or the modification of existing activities. Instead, these new expenses will appear as "add-ons" to the next budget, as happened with the biennium budget introduced by the Secretariat for 2008-2009. We strongly objected during the Fall 2007 UNGA session to this "piecemeal" approach to the budget, which effectively masked the true size of the biennium budget presented to the GA.

MORE CLOSELY LINKING CPC,S
ROLE AND GA ACTION ON THE
BUDGET

¶5. One possible solution to this problem might be for CPC to postpone its final recommendations on the programmatic priorities of the Organization until the Spring of 2009, thereby more realistically taking into account developments between now and then that may involve additional expenditures in order to meet the needs of the Organization. In this

manner, there is a greater opportunity for incorporating items which otherwise would appear as "add-ons" to the budget in the Secretariat,s original core budget proposal for the upcoming biennium. Member States thus would receive a more accurate and comprehensive figure that better reflected anticipated costs without the need for subsequent "add-ons." CPC would be better placed at its 49th session in 2009 to assess the full range of the Organization,s budgetary needs only 4-6 months prior to GA consideration of the next biennium budget.

CPC: VALUE ADDED OR
IRRELEVANT BODY?

¶6. Apart from the flaws inherent in CPC,s determination of programmatic priorities some 18 months prior to GA review and action on the next biennium budget, there is the larger question of whether the Committee for Programme and Coordination still performs a relevant or useful function, and what, if any, relationship the U.S. should maintain with the CPC. USUN fully supported and encouraged the Department,s decision in the Fall of 2006 not to seek U.S. re-election to the CPC when our term expired in late December of that year. Our decision to withdraw from CPC was particularly appropriate given CPC,s ongoing failure to fulfill its mandated responsibilities and the persistent resistance of other members to reform the Committee,s inefficient working methods, reforms we strongly and repeatedly recommended.

¶7. The UK,s decision, in late 2005, to withdraw from the Committee, and Japan,s unwillingness in November 2007 to run for another term, has left the Committee without three of the top contributors to the UN budget (accounting for 45 per cent of the total budget). The CPC, therefore, will now be deciding the program priorities of the Organization with input from only one (France) of the UN,s top five contributors. Two of the seven seats allotted to the Western European and Others Group (WEOG) - the seats the U.S. and UK previously vacated - have not been filled. Among the remaining WEOG members on the Committee (France, Italy, Portugal, Switzerland, Israel), at least one - Portugal - has

privately indicated to USUN that it will not seek re-election for another term when its current membership expires in late December.

STRONG SUPPORT FOR
CPC FROM G-77

¶8. Despite the criticism of the CPC by the U.S. and other like-minded Western states, members of the Group of 77 and China (G-77) consider CPC's role in defining the priorities of the Organization and in shaping the biennium budget to remain essential. When Price-Waterhouse-Coopers questioned CPC's contribution to the legislative process in its August 2006 external experts, comprehensive report on UN governance and oversight, a report requested by world leaders at the September 2005 Summit, G-77 members spoke out quickly and passionately in defense of CPC's continued importance as the one intergovernmental body responsible for overseeing and coordinating implementation of the mandates authorized by ECOSOC and the GA. Suggestions at that time that CPC's role be modified or curtailed were met with staunch G-77 opposition.

¶9. We therefore are left with a body that has failed to fulfill its originally mandated tasks, including: "to examine, in light of the budgetary implications, the totality of the Secretary-General's work programme" (ECOSOC Resolution 2008/LX - May 1976) and "to determine which programmes, subprogrammes or programme elements are obsolete, of marginal usefulness or ineffective and to recommend, as appropriate, their curtailment or termination" (GA Resolution 31/93). As the Department is well aware, USUN's efforts in the past several years, in coordination with the UK, Japan and others, to try to reform and revitalize the CPC to perform its originally intended functions have produced few improvements, given the G-77's reluctance to change a body and a process that they believe gives them control over the legislative and budgetary agenda of the Organization.

SEEKING DEPARTMENT
VIEWS ON NEXT STEPS

¶10. Whether or not the U.S. supports CPC's current role and value to the Organization, CPC members will nonetheless be taking key decisions in the coming weeks that will serve to shape the direction and size of the next biennium budget. In this regard, USUN, with Department concurrence, recommends that we seek to encourage the CPC to postpone final decisions

on programmatic priorities for the Organization until the Spring of 2009 rather than now, closer to the time when the GA will act on the next proposed biennium budget. CPC members could review and modify, if necessary, any initial recommendations they may make at the upcoming 48th session so that the Secretariat can finalize a more accurate, comprehensive biennium budget proposal for 2010-2011 for presentation to the GA in September 2009.

¶11. More broadly, we should decide whether our current posture toward CPC is producing decisions and outcomes that further U.S. interests. USUN notes that the coordination function originally envisioned for CPC, including the elimination of overlapping, duplicative and no longer relevant mandates, would be helpful to our larger efforts to achieve greater efficiencies in UN operations. Whether we continue to press CPC to fulfill these functions, or consider the possible establishment of a new body to achieve these objectives, remains a subject that merits further joint consideration and discussion.

¶12. USUN proposes that in our role as observer at the upcoming CPC session, we underscore CPC's original emphasis on coordination goals. This would include making or supporting a proposal to incorporate the work now underway on mandate review, however limited, into the work of the CPC.
Khalilzad